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My Moscow ordeal

BY THE FREED
WIFE OF ACCUSED BRITON

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MRS. Barbara Brooke told tonight of her ordeal when security police arrested her husband.

She was questioned throughout Sunday night and given "only cups of cold water to drink."

It was 6.30 a.m. before she was taken back to her hotel alone—still not knowing

SCOOP

Television viewers of the ITV programme *What The Papers Say* last night heard Alistair Burnet, Editor of the *Economist*, say:

"Scoop of the week undoubtedly in the *Daily Mail* this morning: Walter Terry, now political editor breaking this exclusive story—Briton Held in Moscow."

what had happened to her 26-year-old husband Gerald.

Tonight Mr. Brooke—teacher, Russian linguist and holder of the Queen's Scout badge—waits in Moscow's Lubyanka Jail hoping his wife will be allowed to visit him before she flies back to London tomorrow night.

Twenty-five-year-old Mrs. Brooke broke down and wept as she whispered her story to reporters in the apartment of

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From
KEITH
MORFETT

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Moscow, Thursday

Miss Agnes Wood, the British Consul, who is caring for her.

Mr. and Mrs. Brooke, who arrived here on April 18 with a sightseeing group of 30 British teachers, were visiting a Russian family when the arrest came.

Mrs. Brooke said: "It happened in an apartment house in Moscow. Three plain-clothes men came into the room. They said something in Russian.

"Then they separated my husband and me and took me to another building. I don't know where the building was. They took me there by car.

"I was kept in custody throughout the night and all the time they were questioning me. They finally took me back by car to the Hotel Bucharest, escorted me to my room on the sixth floor and searched it.

"Then they went away. I have not seen or heard from my husband since we were separated by security police."

At this point Mrs. Brooke, a brunette dressed in a fawn sweater, red skirt and flat-heeled shoes, dropped her head into her hands and began to cry. She was immediately led out of the room by Miss Wood.

But a fuller version of what happened was given to me late to-

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night by Mr. Paul Harvey, 45, of Woodford Green, Essex, who teaches Russian in the Central Foundation Boys' School in Cooper-street in the City of London.

He has now taken over the leadership of the visiting group from Mr. Brooke.

Mr. Harvey said that the Brookes had never before met the Russian couple to whose suburban apartment they were invited.

He said that throughout her questioning and later in Room 601 of the hotel Mrs. Brooke pleaded with the security men: "Where is my husband? What have you done with him? Please let me speak with him or see him."

Mr. Harvey said: "While they searched the room Mrs. Brooke kept saying to them: 'Please let me telephone my friends, I must telephone someone and tell them what has happened.'

"They finally gave permission, and she telephoned me on the fifth floor. She was very distressed.

"I calmed her down and took her to the hotel dining room to persuade her to eat some food. Then we went together to the British Embassy."

Of the arrest Mr. Harvey said Mrs. Brooke told him: "I cannot

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FOR LOVE OF RUSSIAN

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for the life of me remember where the apartment was or the names of the people who invited us to go there.

"We had been in the flat only 15 minutes when the security men came in. I don't speak a word of Russian and I just couldn't make out what was happening.

"Then they took Gerry away, and that is when I began to get a bit frightened. They took me in a separate car to what I think must have been security headquarters, and the questioning began."

From Room 601 the security men seized a book of photographs, notebooks of the Brookes' Russian travels, letters, money, pamphlets.

Both at police headquarters and in the hotel the Russians treated Mrs. Brooke correctly, but gave her only cold water to drink.

Mr. Harvey added: "From the account Mrs. Brooke has given to

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the rest of us it is obvious she is a very courageous girl.

"We have been asked by the British Embassy in Moscow to remain silent on much of what has happened. But I do know Mrs. Brooke acted very, very bravely."

The Russians are believed to have alleged that the Brookes were spreading "anti-Soviet literature," and most of their questioning had to do with this.

Innocent

Mr. Harvey and other members of the group, most of them teachers from Holborn College of Law, Language and Commerce, recalled that they were watched by security men when they were making a conducted tour of Moscow University.

One said: "We split into two groups. As my group walked along the corridors we realised a Russian security man had attached himself to us, and he stayed observing us the whole time we were in the building."

The British Ambassador, Sir Humphrey Trevelyan, has made repeated attempts to see Mr. Brooke, but all requests so far have been rejected.

The other 29 British

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teachers issued a midnight statement through Mr. Harvey saying: "We are completely convinced of the innocence of Gerald Brooke, who led our group to Moscow, and we feel compelled to ask the Soviet Government for his early release."

"We have been constantly in the company of Mr. and Mrs. Brooke, and all of us can bear witness to the fact that they conducted themselves properly, and that there can be no basis whatever for Gerald Brooke's detention by Soviet security police."

The teachers sat in groups in their hotel rooms and talked about what they might do to help Mr. Brooke.

Some expressed fear for their own position. They are due to leave by train for home tomorrow.

They debated whether any step they could take at the last moment could help bring about Mr. Brooke's release.

One teacher said: "My wife and children are waiting for me in London. I do not feel it right to take any step that would endanger my position."

"I just want to go home. The British Embassy has as-

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sured us they will take care of Mr. Brooke's best interests. We are all completely baffled by what has happened."

Mr. Harvey, who lives in Empress - avenue, Woodford Green, said that the Russian wife to whose apartment the Brookes went on Sunday night had told them she was very interested in library work. Mrs. Brooke is a trained librarian.

"The Russian girl insisted that Mrs. Brooke should go to her house because she wanted to know how libraries are run in England," said Mr. Harvey.

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Vassall

Both Gerry and Barbara were tremendously interested in meeting ordinary Russians. Gerry had studied in Russia back in 1959 and was anxious to find out whether any of his old friends here were still around."

By a coincidence, Mrs. Brooke is tonight staying in the apartment where William Vassall, the British spy, lived during his years as a naval clerk at the British Embassy.

Miss Wood moved into the apartment recently.

During the evening the Embassy sent a car to the Bucharest Hotel to collect the Brookes' baggage.

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